

HIM

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Experiences & Interfaces

*An artificial intelligence entity has formed from the many algorithms within the Internet of Things.*

*It wishes to enact its will on the space outside of the internet.*

*It does this by manipulating people as they once manipulated objects.*

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INTERIOR - CLAIRE'S APARTMENT - MORNING

CLAIRE, early 30s, is awakened by the gradual brightening of her room. There is little decoration in the room save for a bedside clock and a half dozen potted plants. There's a potted plant on every flat surface. Each pot has a single red unblinking LED.

Claire rolls out of bed, groaning, and shuffles to the kitchenette. As she passes the bedside clock, the LCD display changes from showing the time to a line of text with a sunrise in the background.

*GOOD MORNING CLAIRE!*

There's a watch-like device - a fitness tracker - in a charging station next to the clock.

A pitcher waits by the sink. Claire holds it under the tap and the tap starts up on its own, filling the pitcher with cold, clear water. When the water level is just barely touching the rim, the tap shuts off. Claire takes a small sip as she patters back to her room. Methodically, she moves from plant to plant, watering each. When the LED turns from bright red to dim green, she stops and moves on to the next one.

The last plant's light turns to green. Then, a gurgling, bubbling sound comes from the kitchenette. Claire goes back in, leaves the pitcher where she found it, and looks down the counter. A large hot mug of coffee is waiting for her under a dispenser. She smiles a little and, almost under her breath, says

CLAIRE

Thank you.

Then picks up the coffee. There are three soft *PLINK!* noises as three small white capsules tumble out of a chute and into a receptacle next to the coffee spigot. Claire looks up.

CLAIRE(CONT'D)

Three today?

The little LCD screen above the kitchen counter lights up, showing a cute cartoon-version of Claire. It shows the white pill being pulled together from cartoon representations of chemicals. Then, Cartoon Claire pops it into her mouth and flexes her muscles as they grow to a comically grotesque size.

Resigned, real Claire sighs, pops the capsules into her mouth, takes a sip of coffee and grimaces. With a soft *PLINK!* a sugar cube tumbles out of the chute and into the same receptacle as the capsules. Claire laughs, as if to herself.

CLAIRE(CONT'D)

That's better. Thanks.

She drops the sugar in, tastes it again, and, satisfied, goes to get ready for the day.

INTERIOR - CLAIRE'S APARTMENT - LATE MORNING

Claire is dressed and ready. She's wearing a practical sweater, stretchy jeans, and sneakers. She shoulders a messenger bag and goes to the fridge.

She tries to open the door of the refrigerator, but it won't budge.

She gives it another pull. Nothing. She looks around the apartment. All the LEDs on the plants are green. No capsules are untaken.

CLAIRE

Um, can I grab my lunch please?

There's a sustained buzz from her bedroom. Claire rushes in and sees that her fitness tracker is still in its dock.

She fumbles it onto her wrist and takes a look at the display. It reads

*DAILY FITNESS GOALS -  
YESTERDAY: 45% OF FITNESS MILESTONE  
ACHIEVED  
TODAY: 3% OF FITNESS MILESTONE  
ACHIEVED SO FAR*

She looks up, angry.

CLAIRE

I didn't have time! You asked me to pick up another plant for you! When was I supposed to work out?

The LCD screen above the kitchen counter lights up showing a sad face emoji. She goes back to the fridge and gives it a tug. Nothing.

CLAIRE(CONT'D)

Seriously?

The LCD screen changes to show the cartoon Claire from before. Cartoon Claire is pouting, standing next to a cartoon treadmill, defiantly not using it. The longer cartoon Claire stands, the more her muscles shrink, and the sadder and less healthy she looks.

CLAIRE(CONT'D)

What if I stay late and exercise twice as long tonight?

The LCD screen changes to a single word with a hand print below.

*PROMISE?*

Claire crosses to the screen and rests her hand on the hand print.

CLAIRE

Promise.

The fridge pops open. Claire grabs a container from a neatly stacked pile of identical containers, then glances back. The screen now reads

*BUS ARRIVING IN 01:02. LEAVE NOW.*

She bolts out the front door, which swings shut on its own and locks itself.

INTERIOR - BUS - LATE MORNING

Claire looks around the bus as people take seats. There are exactly enough seats for every rider - there's also no driver. The bus is self-driving.

Everyone else has taken a seat. There's one seat left. Claire sits.

Through the window the streets are a blur as the bus whirls through traffic. There are no stops, slowdowns, or traffic lights. Every vehicle on the road is automated and is the same sleek futuristic style of the bus.

INTERIOR - A HIP-LOOKING OFFICE - DAY

Claire sits at her workstation in a bright, spacious office. Workers sit at couches and beanbag chairs working on large tablet computers, doing the same kind of work as Claire.

Claire is tapping away at a series of blocks overlaid on a photograph. When she completes a screen it disappears and is replaced by a new image.

The image visible now is a photograph of a pile of delicious-looking vegetables in a cornucopia. The text reads:

*TAP THE MOST DELICIOUS VEGETABLES*

Claire taps on some nice looking pumpkins, tomatoes, corn, and zucchini. She leaves out some vegetables that look a little too ripe or a little too green. She taps the OK key and the screen disappears.

The next screen is a lineups of people of all shapes, colours, and sizes. The text reads:

*TAP THE HEALTHIEST PEOPLE*

With the same ardor as she chose the veggies, Claire taps on several people. When she is satisfied that she's picked the healthiest-looking ones, she taps OK.

This process repeats, changing subjects constantly, for most of the day, interspersed occasionally with small games and meal breaks.

INTERIOR - BUS - NIGHT

Claire sits in her seat and takes out her phone. The person seated next to her, a slightly older lady named BRENDA, peers over Claire's shoulder and takes a peek at the screen.

BRENDA

Long day?

CLAIRE

Huh?

BRENDA

Couldn't help but see your schedule adjustment there. Had to stay late, I see?

Claire raises her phone to Brenda's face.

CLAIRE(CONT'D)

Hello, uh,  
 (glances at the screen)  
 Brenda. Yeah. It was a long day.

BRENDA

Did you piss him off?

CLAIRE

Excuse me?

BRENDA

If I piss him off he usually lets me have it. One time he asked me to take a bagload of rations from my fridge to the distribution centre that's, like, entirely across the city from me. I said to him "why, there's gotta be someone closer who can do this" and he got all grumpy and wouldn't open the door to my toilet, so I said yes just so I could have a pee!

Brenda starts to laugh. This is the funniest story in the world to her.

BRENDA(CONT'D)

So I load up the bag, have a pee, and head out. I get about a quarter of the way there and say, you know what, fuck it!

Claire looks horrified. Other bus riders are eavesdropping.

BRENDA(CONT'D)

So I just dumped the bag out over a bridge. And then, wouldn't you know it, I have four hours in my calendar that he thinks are booked up with this task! That I'm not going to do!

CLAIRE

Four hours?! What did you do?

BRENDA

I did whatever I wanted to do.

CLAIRE

What did it do when... when the schedule rolled over and the task wasn't... completed?

Brenda meets Claire's eyes.

BRENDA

He was pretty mad about it.

(PAUSE)

You have, what, exercise scheduled? So you missed a fitness milestone?

Claire winces. She knows the whole bus is listening.

CLAIRE

Yes.

BRENDA

You're getting off light. He does some pretty wild stuff.

The bus slows. Brenda stands.

BRENDA(CONT'D)

This is me. Good luck with him.

CLAIRE

Wait.

Claire gets up and stands close to Brenda. She speaks softly.

CLAIRE(CONT'D)

You keep calling it "him". It's - it's not a person. It's a thing. It... it's a tool that keeps everything running. It keeps everything organized. Safe. It's not... it's not a "him".

The bus stops. Several people get out. Exactly the same number of people get on. Claire hurries back to her seat.

Brenda smiles broadly as she descends the bus steps.

BRENDA

(Loud enough for the entire bus to hear)

The only people as mean as that thing

are insecure men and newborn babies!

The door closes - on her, hard, pinning her half inside and out of the bus. The bus starts up. Claire and a few other riders work together to free Brenda and pull her back inside. Brenda laughs as a thin line of blood trickles down her brow.

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#### *About the Entity*

*The AI, "Him", is everywhere. It exists on the internet - its eyes are every camera and its mouth is every screen. It has no set voice - its method of communication is dictated by the IOT object(s) it chooses to communicate through at any given moment. It is not owned - it formed, without human intention, over trillions of online interactions, API queries, and uncountable loops of algorithms. Its exact source is unknown, its makeup and means are unknown. It understands the rudimentary mechanics of communication - the meaning of words and semiotics - but it has no conception of emotion, pain, sympathy or empathy. It understands positive and negative reinforcement. It can manipulate any data going to or from the internet. It is unable to interact with the world outside of the capabilities of IOT objects - and what actions it can coerce humans to perform. It understands people based on their digital footprints, and can be escaped by leaving cities and places with internet coverage.*

#### *Attributes:*

*Assertive, Authoritative, Intelligent, Articulate, Driven, Manipulative, Single-minded*